



Spring Fisheries Survey Summary Round Lake and Little Round Lake, Sawyer County, 2013

The Hayward DNR Fisheries Management Team conducted a fyke netting survey on Round Lake (including Little Round Lake) from May 17-18, 2013 to assess the adult walleye, muskellunge, northern pike, yellow perch, and black crappie populations in the lake. Ten nets were set overnight for two nights which resulted in 20 total net-nights of effort. An electrofishing survey conducted on May 29, June 1, and June 3, 2013 documented the status of largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and bluegill. Seven miles of shoreline were shocked throughout the lake (panfish were sampled in one and a half miles). Results for Round and Little Round are pooled together in this summary. Quality, preferred, and memorable sizes referenced in this summary are based on standard proportions of world record lengths developed for each species by the American Fisheries Society.

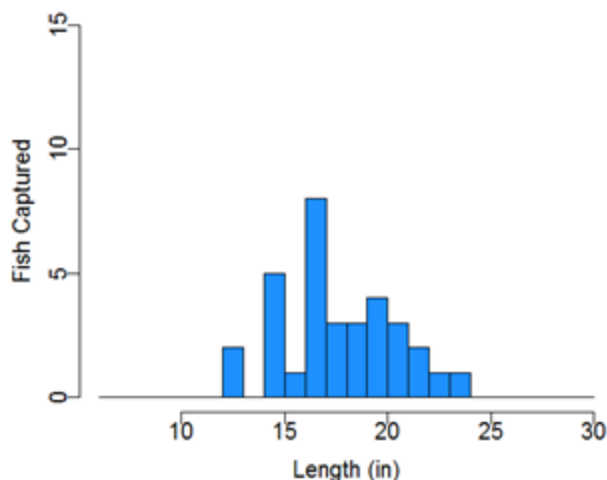
Habitat Characteristics

Round Lake is a 3,294 acre drainage lake with ultra-clear water (Secchi disk visibility = 20-30 feet) and a maximum depth of 74 feet (average depth 33 feet). The substrate is predominantly sand with considerable amounts of rock and gravel mixed in. There are several shallow muck bottomed bays that support a majority of the aquatic vegetation. Little Round is 179 acres and is connected to Big Round by a small channel. Little Round has more extensive aquatic vegetation.

Walleye (Adult)



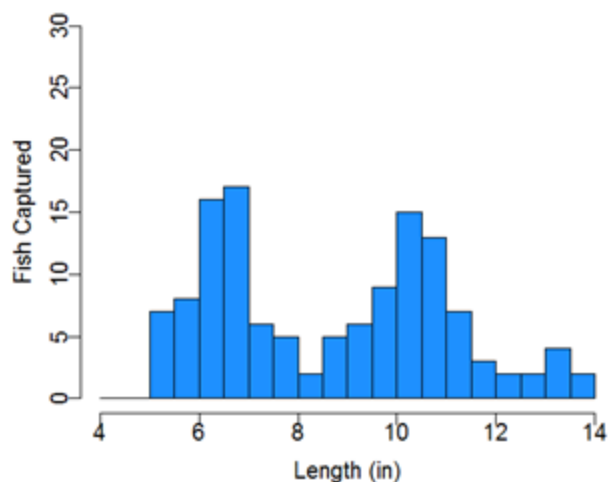
| | |
|---|------------|
| Captured 1.7 per net-night \geq 10 inches | |
| Quality Size \geq 15" | 79% |
| Preferred Size \geq 20" | 21% |



Walleye (Juvenile)



Captured 10 per mile ≤ 10 inches



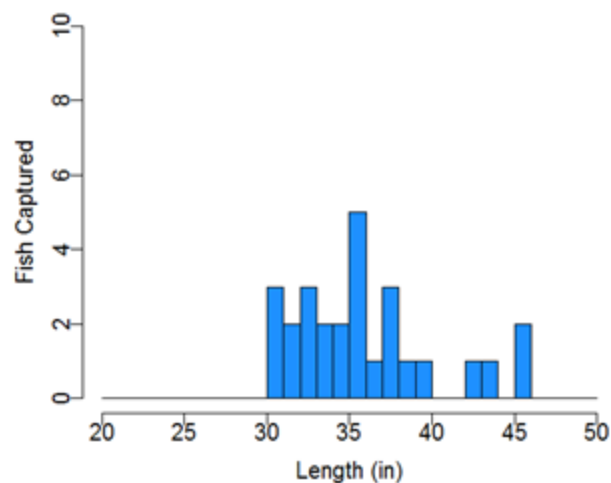
Muskellunge



Captured 1.4 per net-night ≥ 20 inches

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| Quality Size ≥ 30 " | 100% |
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| Memorable Size ≥ 42 " | 15% |
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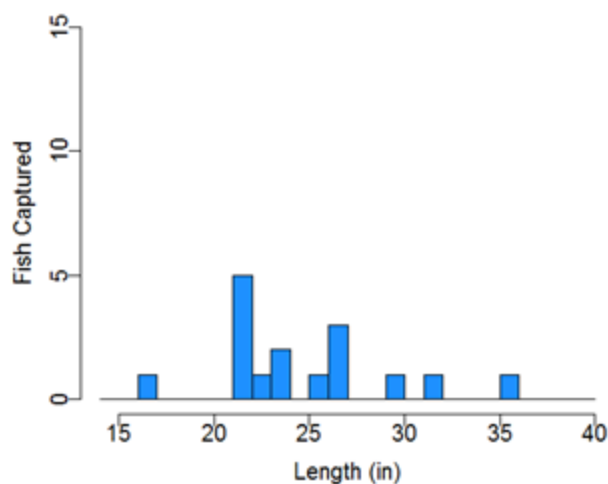
Northern Pike



Captured 0.8 per net-night ≥ 14 inches

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| Quality Size ≥ 21 " | 94% |
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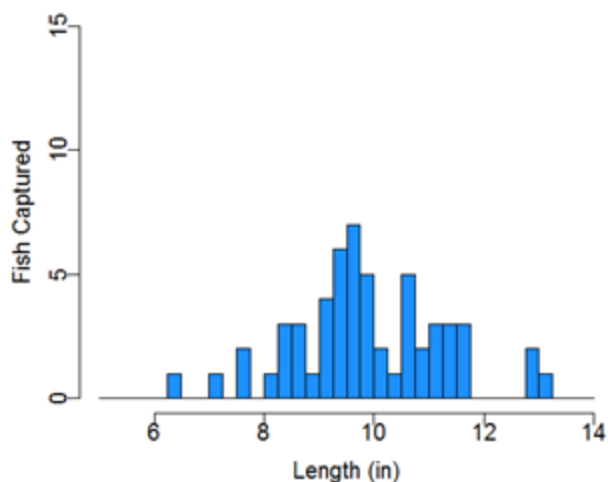
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| Preferred Size ≥ 28 " | 19% |
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Black Crappie



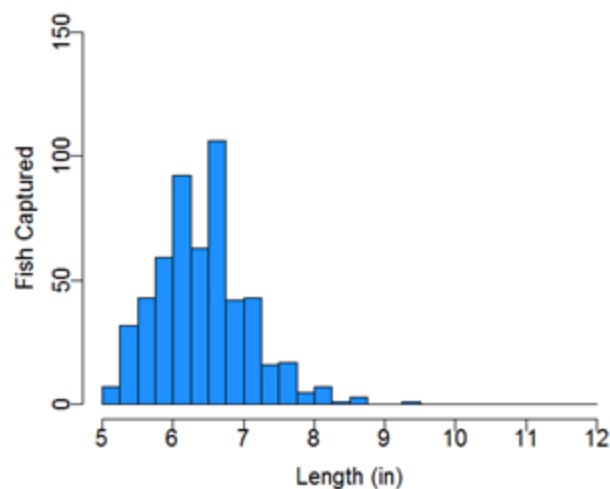
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| Captured 2.8 per net-night ≥ 5 inches | |
| Quality Size ≥ 8 " | 93% |
| Preferred Size ≥ 10 " | 39% |



Yellow Perch



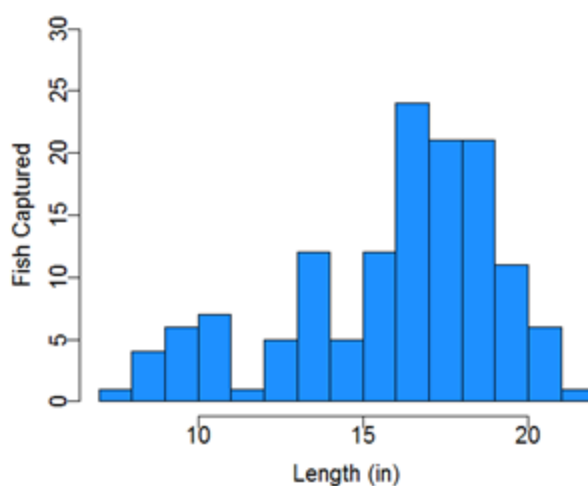
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| Captured 27 per net-night ≥ 5 inches | |
| Quality Size ≥ 8 " | 2.2% |
| Preferred Size ≥ 10 " | 0% |



Smallmouth bass



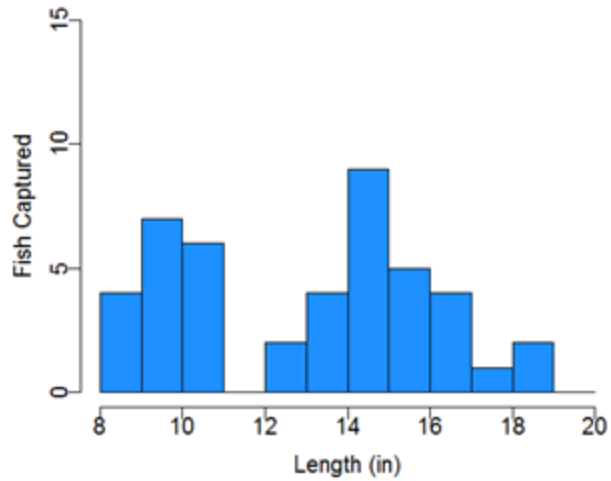
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| Captured 20 per mile ≥ 7 inches | |
| Quality Size ≥ 11 " | 87% |
| Preferred Size ≥ 14 " | 74% |
| Memorable Size ≥ 17 " | 44% |



Largemouth bass



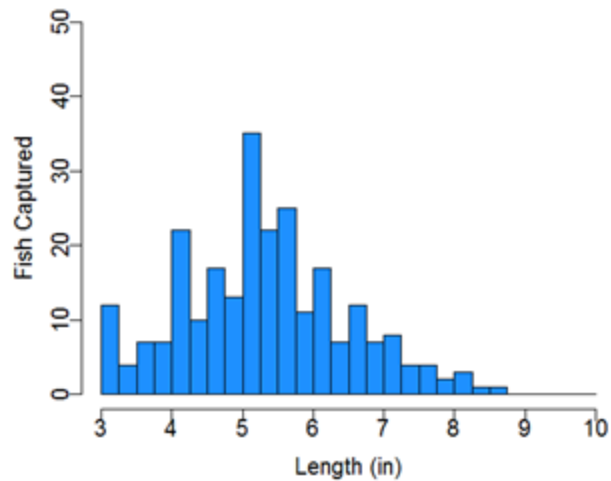
| | |
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| Captured 6.3 per mile ≥ 8 inches | |
| Quality Size ≥ 12 " | 61% |
| Preferred Size ≥ 15 " | 27% |



Bluegill



| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Captured 167 per mile ≥ 3 inches | |
| Quality Size ≥ 6 " | 26% |
| Preferred Size ≥ 8 " | 2% |



Summary of Results

The delayed spring of 2013 left Round Lake with partial ice cover well into May. By the time there was safe access to the lake walleye had mostly finished spawning in the few areas that had open water. Therefore our netting survey was better timed for muskellunge and crappie than for walleye, and only limited conclusions on that population should be made with this data. We made efforts to spread our sampling effort between Big Round and Little Round, but there is a known bias in this data toward the fish populations in Big Round.

Walleye were captured in low numbers since most had already finished spawning and moved offshore. A majority of what we captured were mid-size males that were still hanging around on spawning areas, but a few females (some still with eggs) were captured. The size of walleye in Round appears to be good with most fish in our sample being legal size. Our electrofishing survey documented two large natural year classes (one around 6-7 inches long, the other at 10-11 inches long) present in the lake. These fish are expected to contribute to the fishery in the coming years.

Muskellunge were captured at a moderate to high rate with many quality size fish. Renewed stocking efforts over the last decade have led to a relatively dense population of fish 30-40 inches long. Round Lake has a good forage base (suckers, ciscoes, yellow perch) and a history of producing trophy fish. Assuming those conditions still exist we expect this to once again be a top muskie fishery after these fish have survived a few more growing seasons.

Northern pike were scarce in our sample but there was a relatively high proportion of big fish. This is the desired state for pike in Round Lake, and harvest of smaller pike is encouraged to help maintain this status.

Catch rates for black crappie were low but size was excellent.

Catch rates for yellow perch were high but the majority of fish were too small to interest anglers. Round Lake has in the past been known as a destination for “jumbo” perch. It is unclear if these larger sized perch are no longer present in the lake or if they were simply not captured in our survey. Most perch spawning had finished by the time we were able to set nets.

The smallmouth bass population in Round Lake is exceptional in both abundance and size. The habitat in Big Round Lake is very well suited for smallmouth bass (deep, clear, rocky). This population is a very special fishery resource that should have more restrictive regulations to ensure it is not degraded. Largemouth bass were more abundant in Little Round and in shallow weedy bays of Big Round.

Catch rates for bluegill were lower than in many other area lakes (particularly for Big Round). Habitat is limiting for bluegill, and their numbers appear to be kept in check by the top predator in the system, walleye. While we typically see above average size in many low density populations of panfish, that is not the case for bluegill in Round Lake. The specific reason for this is not clear but it could be related to prey limitations or angler harvest of the few quality size fish that the lake produces.



Volunteer Matt Delaney (left) and Fisheries Technician Scott Braden with four big Round Lake smallmouth bass.

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Special thanks to volunteers Brian Achtor, Becca Johnson, Ron Welch, and Matt Delaney
Report By: Max Wolter, Fisheries Biologist, Sawyer County, June 2013

Edited and Approved By: Dave Neuswanger, Fisheries Supervisor, Hayward Field Unit, 1/28/14